

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10  
LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 OMB-01 ACDA-12 MCE-00  
TRSE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01  
SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 /105 W  
-----027713 060419Z /16

R 051511Z MAY 78  
FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5728  
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

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BRUSSELS FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: ELAB, GR  
SUBJECT: MAY 4 LABOR DAY CELEBRATION

REF: (A) ATHENS 3577 (B) ATHENS 3472 (C) 77 ATHENS 4108

1. THE MAY 4 CEMMEMORATION OF LABOR DAY AND THE COMPANION  
24-HOUR GENERAL STRIKE THREATENED BY LEFTIST FACTIONS WITH-  
IN THE GREEK GENERAL CONFEDERATION OF LABOR (GSEE) MUST HAVE  
BEEN A DISAPPOINTMENT TO THEIR ORGANIZERS. WHILE THOSE ATTEND-  
ING THE RALLIES YESTERDAY IN ATHENS CERTAINLY OUTNUMBERED  
THE CROWD AT THE OFFICIAL MAY DAY CELBRATIONS ON MAY 1  
(REFTEL B), A LARGE SEGMENT OF THE PARTICIPANTS, ESTIMATED  
AT BETWEEN 5-10,000, APPEARED TO BE HIGH SCHOOL AND UNIVER-  
SITY STUDENTS (MOST SCHOOLS ARE IN RECESS). AT ANY  
RATE, IT APPEARED TO EYEWITNESSES THAT THE REPRESENTATION  
FROM RANK AND FILE LABOR WAS RELATIVELY SPARSE ON THIS NORMAL  
WORKING DAY.

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2. ADDRESSING THE CROWD WERE THE LEADERS OF THE  
THREE LEFTIST FACTIONS WITHIN THE GSEE--HATZIVASSILIOU  
OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE INTERIOR'S AEM, PYTHAROULIS  
OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE EXTERIOR'S ESAK AND PAPADAKIS  
OF THE PASOK PARTY'S PASKE. THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATION-  
AL STUDENTS UNION OF GREECE (EFEE) CHRISTOS PAPOUTSIS AND

A VARIETY OF PRESUMABLY LEFTIST MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS FROM THE NEARBY TOWNS ALSO SPOKE. MOST THEMES STRESSED BY THE SPEAKERS HAD TO DO WITH ECONOMIC DEMANDS. FOR INSTANCE, THEY REPEATEDLY ATTACKED THE GOVERNMENT FOR ITS ALLEGEDLY ONE-SIDED AUSTERITY PROGRAM WHICH THEY CLAIMED WAS DETRIMENTAL TO LABOR. THEY CALLED FOR THE REFORM OF LAW 330 (THE ORGANIC LEGISLATION COVERING LABOR ORGANIZATION) AND LAW 3239 (CONCERNING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING PROCEDURES AND DISPUTE SETTLEMENT). POLITICAL SLOGANEERING WAS LIMITED, BUT SOME SPEAKERS REVERTED TO THE TRADITIONAL "OUT OF NATO", "OUT WITH THE AMERICANS AND THE BASES OF DEATH" AS WELL AS TO "NO TO THE NEUTRON BOMB". SEVERAL ORATORS LIKEWISE CAME OUT AGAINST THE NEW ANTI-TERRORIST LAW.

3. IN CONTRAST TO LAST YEAR (REFTEL C) THE MAY 4 RALLY SEEMED TO LACK SPONTANEITY IN SPITE OF THE YOUTHFUL NATURE OF THE CROWD. THE ONLY UNTOWARD EPISODE OCCURRED WHEN A GROUP OF SOME 10 STUDENTS WAS DETAINED VERY BRIEFLY BY THE AUTHORITIES FOR THEIR OBSTREPEROUS CONDUCT FOLLOWING THE RALLY.

4. THE CALL FOR A GENERALIZED 24-HOUR STRIKE THROUGHOUT GREECE WENT LARGELY UNHEEDED. ALMOST ALL INDUSTRIES, COMMERCE AND SERVICES CONTINUED TO FUNCTION NORMALLY, AND ABSENTEEISM REPORTEDLY WAS NOT SIGNIFICANT IN ANY SECTOR. THE GOG USED ITS MEDIA SATLETS TO PUBLICIZE THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FAILURE OF LABOR TO HEED THE STRIKE CALL. ACMOGEN THESSALONIKI REPORTS THAT THE RESPECTIVE RALLIES THERE OCCURRED ALONG SIMILAR LINES.

5. COMMENT: IT APPEARS THAT THE GOG'S DECISION NOT TO SEEK A CONFRONTATION WITH THE LEFTIST FACTIONS IN THE GSEE OVER THE ISSUE OF SEPARATE LABOR DAY COMMEMORATIONS WAS A WISE ONE. ALTHOUGH THE GOG'S MAY 1 GATHERING COULD HARDLY BE CALLED AN INDICATION OF EXTENSIVE LABOR SUPPORT, NEITHER COULD THE MAY 4 RALLY IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT MORE PEOPLE ATTENDED. VARIOUS FACTORS WERE AT PLAY WHICH DETRACTED FROM BOTH LABOR DAY CELEBRATIONS THIS YEAR. WHILE THE GSEE CLAIMED THAT THE CALM WHICH PREVAILED THIS YEAR WAS DUE TO THE "MATURITY" OF THE GREEK WORKERS, UNDOUBTEDLY AT LEAST EQUALLY SIGNIFICANT WAS THE COINCIDENCE OF GREEK EASTER WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT HOLIDAY IN THIS COUNTRY. THE INABILITY OF THE TWO COMMUNIST PARTIES AND OF PAPANDREOU'S PASOK TO PULL OFF A MEANINGFUL RALLY AND STRIKE ON MAY 4 MIGHT WELL INDICATE THE INABILITY AT THIS POINT OF THESE PARTIES TO GALVANIZE ORGANIZED LABOR FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES. HOWEVER, IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT LABOR IS CONTENT WITH THE ECONOMIC POLICIES BEING PURSUED BY THE GOG. WHERE

POCKETBOOK ISSUES ARE CONCERNED, LABOR SEEMS TO BE  
GROWING INCREASINGLY RESTIVE. END COMMENT.  
MCCLOSKEY

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## Message Attributes

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